



COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS



Let's pull together before we're torn apart.

2016

ANNUAL REPORT

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humanrights.lincoln.ne.gov

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LCHR ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Mayor

May 2017

Dear Lincoln Residents,

The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) dates back to 1966 when Title 11 on equal opportunity in employment and housing was added to the Lincoln Municipal Code. As this important agency concluded its 50th year of service, the staff continued the mission of promoting equal opportunity and combating discrimination. This Annual Report highlights the work of LCHR in 2016 in enforcing the protections afforded by local, state and federal law.

This past year, LCHR welcomed two new Commissioners to three-year terms – Thomas Beckius and Carlos Garcia. I appreciate the willingness of all our volunteer Commissioners who give us their valuable time and talents. They demonstrate a strong commitment to equality and fairness in employment, housing and public accommodation.

In 2016, Commissioners and our two LCHR investigators closed 20 housing cases, 51 employment cases and one public accommodation case. LCHR also reached 6,652 residents with 180 educational sessions covering civil rights and responsibilities.

The annual Civil Rights Conference in April 2016 focused on both employment and housing with presentations from local, regional and national experts. We appreciate our Conference sponsors for their continued support. They include the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Omaha Human Rights and Relations Department, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Nebraska Housing Developers Association. The success of our conference depends on their support.

While the battle against prejudice continues, we have made great strides in Lincoln. The work of the dedicated LCHR Commissioners and staff will ensure that the progress continues. I am proud to live in a community where its citizens embrace inclusion and are not afraid to say that hate and discrimination will not be tolerated.

Sincerely,



Chris Beutler
Mayor, City of Lincoln

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Executive Director

Dear Friends of the Commission:

Another year has come to a close! In 2016, we bid farewell to Tom Beckius and Elizabeth Kennedy-King. Tom left after a brief tenure to serve the City on another board. Elizabeth served two full terms on the Commission before relocating. We could not begin the task of enforcing discrimination laws without the spirit of commitment and dedication demonstrated by all of our Commissioners.

We began the year fully staffed and both Abby and Margie worked diligently investigating housing, public accommodation, and employment discrimination cases. In January of 2016, Francisca Beltran joined our staff as the new Community Outreach Coordinator and continues LCHR's associations with Community agencies and resources. Francisca has maintained our tradition of advising Lincoln Public High School students about their rights related to housing and employment as they prepare to move into the workforce and out of the parental home. Francisca continues our outreach efforts involving distribution of Commission pamphlets at various locations, such as the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Clinics, the Center for People in Need, the Asian Center, El Centro de las Americas, and UNL to spread the word about the existence of the Commission and its role in the community.

Our annual Civil Rights Conference was a great success! We had 180 professionals present and our speakers came to us from the U. S. Housing and Urban Development Office in Kansas City, MO and the Omaha Field Office as well, the District Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in St. Louis, MO, and the Great Plains Americans with Disabilities Action Center. In addition to the legal updates that are provided every year, we celebrated our 50 year anniversary by highlighting LGBT workplace discrimination and best practices in creating discrimination free housing. All were well received and it was a great opportunity to renew and refresh our commitment to this important work.

As the year came to an end, we learned, with all of you, the outcome of the presidential election and resolved to continue our fight for equity. LCHR appreciates the support it has enjoyed over the years from multiple administrations and the commitment of Mayor Beutler and his staff as we face these difficult times. The LCHR continues to enforce civil rights laws while celebrating the diversity that makes this City a great place to live, work and raise a family!

Best Regards,



Kimberley Taylor-Riley
Director of Equity and Diversity

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Commission Chair

Dear Citizens and Friends of the Commission,

I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the Commission's work throughout 2016. We hope to educate the employers, employees, landlords, and tenants about acceptable practices and discriminatory ones that arise in the daily lives of the residents of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska. I want to acknowledge the Executive Director and staff of the LCHR for their work on behalf of the city. They continue to serve in a professional manner, to investigate complaints, discuss the cases brought before the Commission, and issue findings in a timely and just manner.

I was proud to serve with Amanda Baron, Carlos Garcia, Susan Oldfield, Jon Rehm, Micheal Q. Thompson and Melanie Ways on the Commission. This diverse complement of individuals allowed the Commission to operate as an experienced set of fact finders, thoughtful problem solvers, and committed dispute resolution specialists. Their civic service on the Commission shows that Lincoln is a place where people count.

During 2016, we said goodbye to Commissioners Elizabeth Kennedy-King and Tom Beckius. We thank them for their service to the City of Lincoln and wish them well in their future endeavors.

The annual Civil Rights Conference was hosted by the LCHR staff in April 2016 and was again a resounding success. The Annual Conference is an educational and instructive how-to seminar focusing on compliance with housing and employment requirements that affect all of us. Each year, the quality of the conference and the number of participants grows. I am extremely proud of the work the staff performs to host the conference. Hats off to them.

Our work continues as we strive for fairness and equality in a city that supports a local Civil Rights Agency to specifically address housing and employment discrimination. How fortunate we are to live in Lincoln, Nebraska, a city committed to equity and fairness for all its residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie Shobe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bennie Shobe
Chair, 2016

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Commissioners

2016 Commissioners



Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) Commissioners: Front row, left to right: Melanie Ways, Bennie Shobe, Jr. (Chair) and Amanda Baron (Vice-Chair). Back row, left to right: Tom Beckius, Jonathan Rehm, Carlos Garcia, Susan Oldfield and Micheal Q. Thompson. Not pictured: Elizabeth Kennedy-King.

The LCHR Commission is a nine member board of diverse people who hear and decide the cases presented to them. They are volunteers who are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. An additional goal of the Commission is to continue educating the public on discrimination laws in the hope of preventing and eventually eliminating unlawful discrimination. They meet on the last Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the County/City Building. The public is welcome to attend.

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Commissioners continued



Tom Beckius



Elizabeth Kennedy-King

In 2016, two of our dedicated Commissioners resigned from the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights. Beckius began serving on the Commission in May 2016, and resigned later that year to serve on the Lincoln Planning Board. Kennedy-King served from March 2012 until August 2016. Their commitment to the Commission and the work we do will be greatly missed.

Thank You!

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Mission Statement

Mission

The administration of the Human Rights Division supports the enforcement of all provisions of Title 11 of the Lincoln Municipal Code. To receive, settle, conciliate, investigate, issue findings, and hold public hearings on complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, familial status, age, ancestry, marital status, and retaliation.

To perform functions and activities with community groups, businesses, schools, and governmental entities for the purpose of promoting understanding between races, cultures, and sexes, and to work to eliminate inequalities and sources of inter-racial friction.

Review all City of Lincoln procurement bids and awards in excess of \$10,000.00.

Review DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprises) program of minority and women-owned businesses and maintain directory.

Goals

To eliminate and prevent all forms of illegal discrimination, to assure and foster equal opportunity for all citizens of the City, and to act in all matters within its jurisdiction.

The Commission's Role

The Commission is a NEUTRAL agency. We do not serve as either side's lawyer, advocate, or advisor. We are not prosecutors. We do not take the side of either the complainant (the person who filed the complaint) or the respondent (the alleged discriminator).

The job of the Commission is:

- to *investigate* complaints of discrimination;
- to *settle* complaints, if possible;
- to *determine*, after investigation, whether there was discrimination in violation of the City of Lincoln Equal Opportunity Ordinance; and
- to *order remedies* if the complainant proves at a hearing that discrimination has occurred.

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LCHR Staff

KIMBERLEY TAYLOR-RILEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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ktaylor-riley@lincoln.ne.gov

MARGIE NICHOLS
SENIOR CIVIL RIGHTS
INVESTIGATOR



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SENIOR CIVIL RIGHTS
INVESTIGATOR



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alittrell@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) is the primary city agency that has the responsibility for the remedy of discrimination complaints brought by individuals. Any remedy pursued by LCHR will be based on the enforcement authority of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance, which provides a fair and impartial process for resolving charges of discrimination. LCHR also provides community education and technical assistance in order for people to know and understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

FRANCISCA BELTRAN
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
COORDINATOR



Tel 402-441-7625
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PEG DILLON
SENIOR
OFFICE ASSISTANT

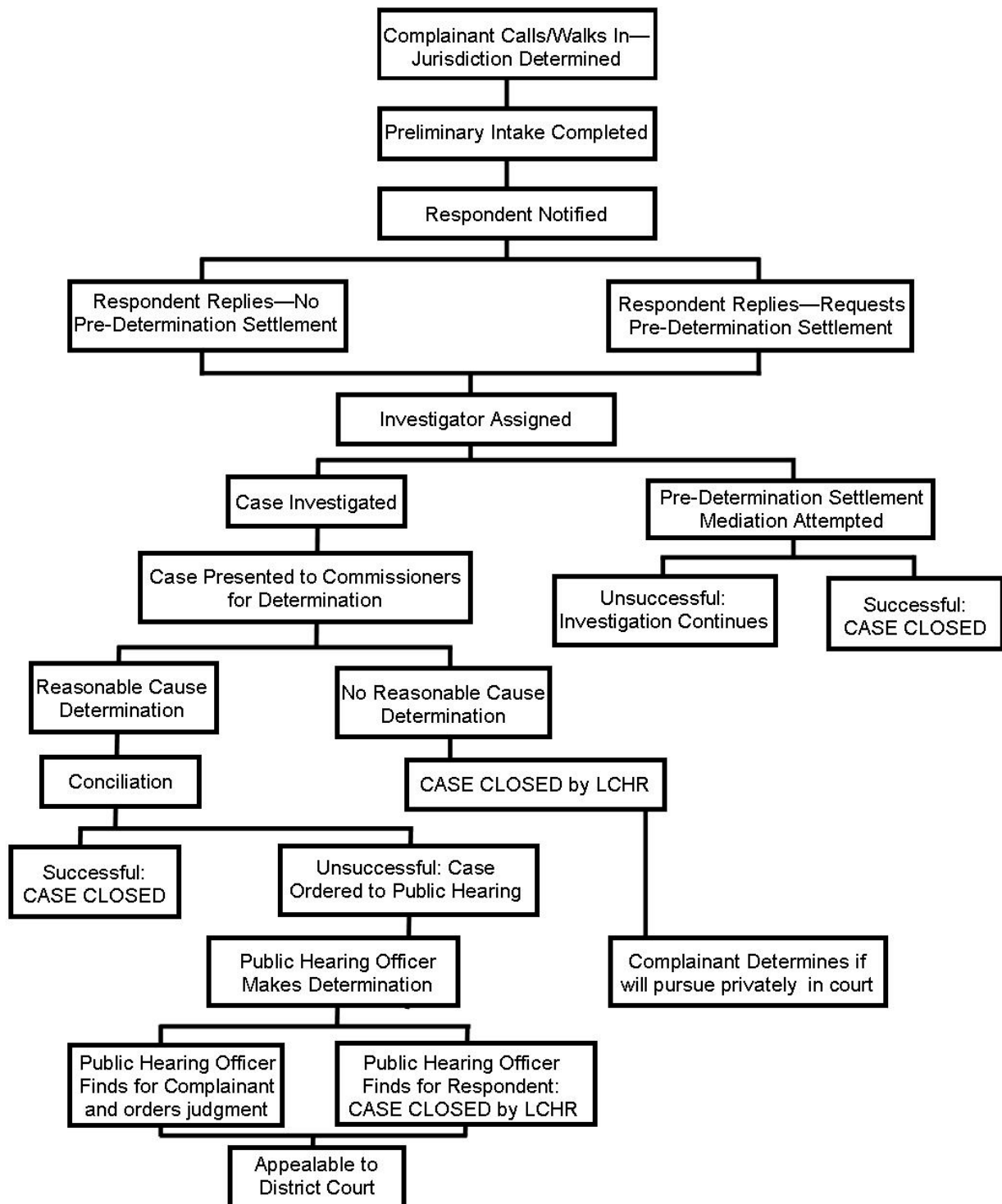


Tel 402-441-7624
pdillon@lincoln.ne.gov

*Ms. Littrell now works in the City Attorney's office as an Assistant City Attorney.

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Complaint Process*

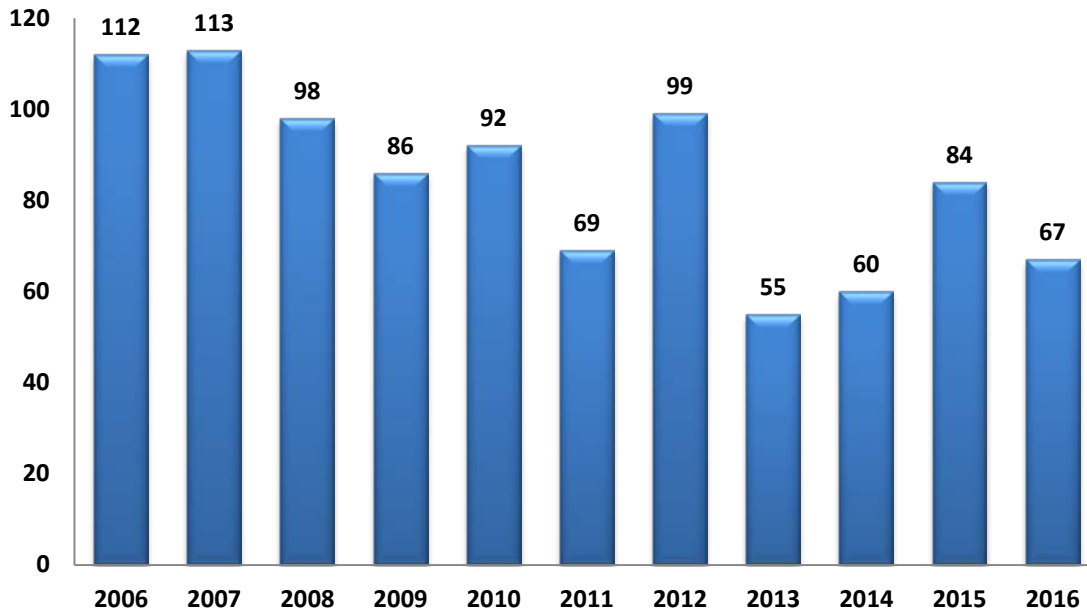


*Complainant always has the option throughout the process of pursuing his or her case privately in court.

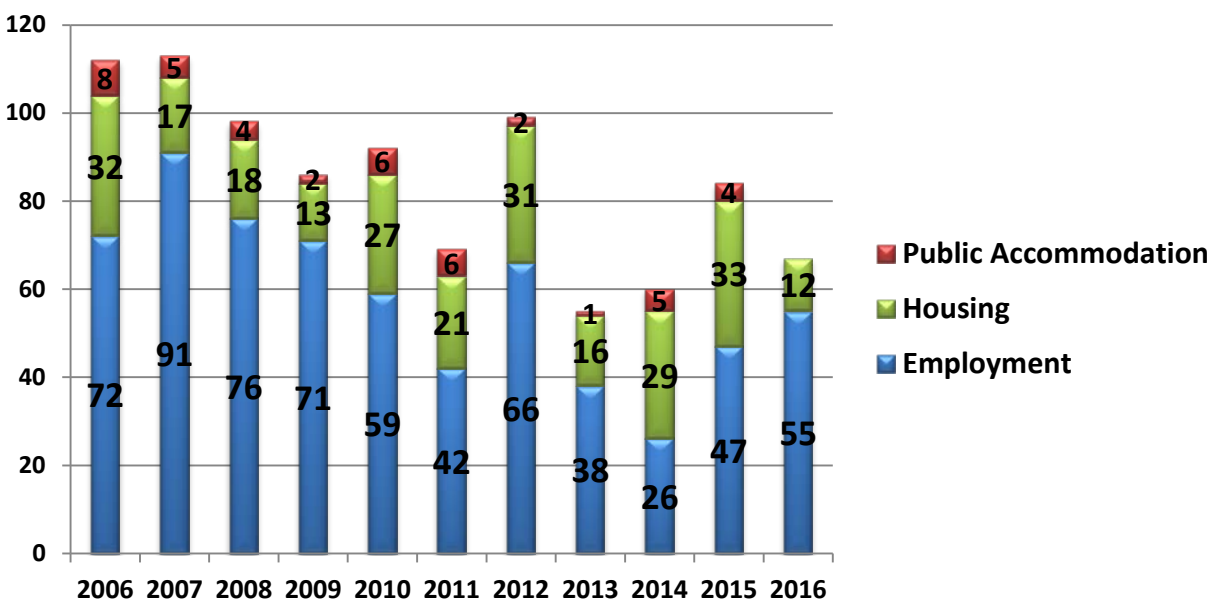
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Case Statistics

Cases Filed 2006-2016



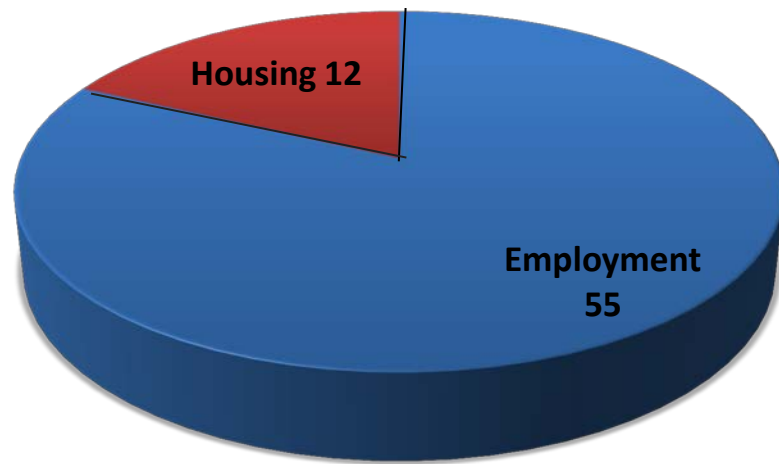
Cases Filed by Type 2006-2016



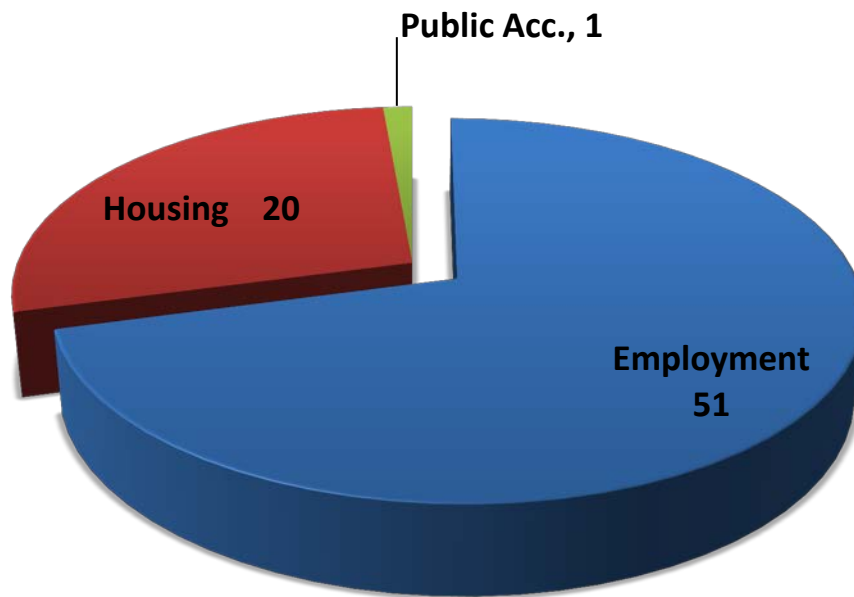
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Case Statistics Continued

Cases Filed by Type, Total 67



Cases Closed* by Type, Total 72

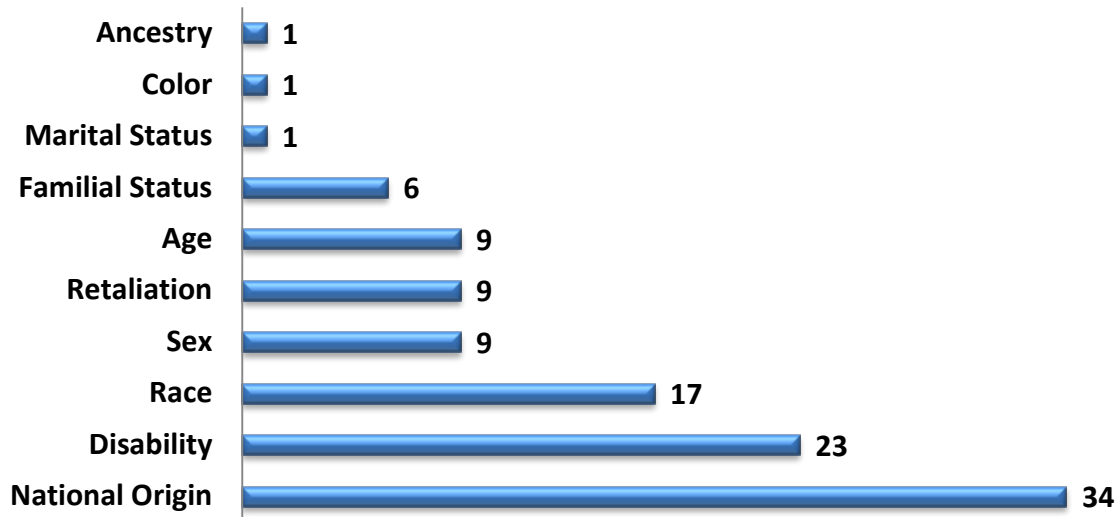


*Cases closed include cases filed from 2015-2016 but closed in calendar year 2016.

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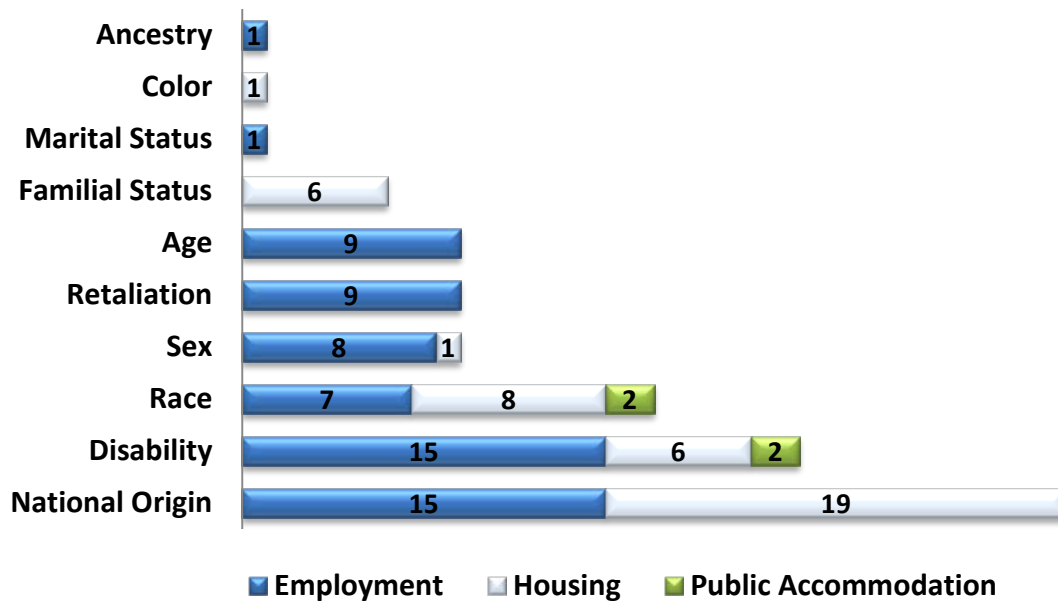
Case Statistics Continued

Breakdown of Cases Filed by Basis*



*Cases are often filed under more than one basis, which could include a case filed, for example, on the basis of both sex and disability, or race and retaliation.

Breakdown of Cases Filed by Basis and Type*

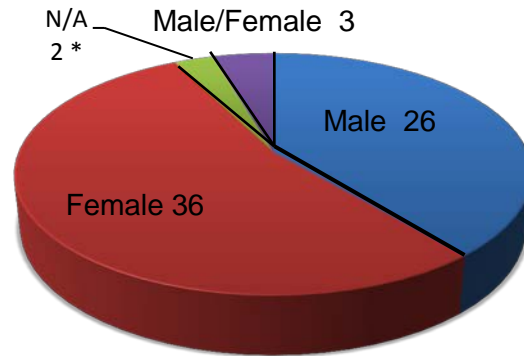


*The basis of age is only covered in employment, while familial status is only covered in housing.

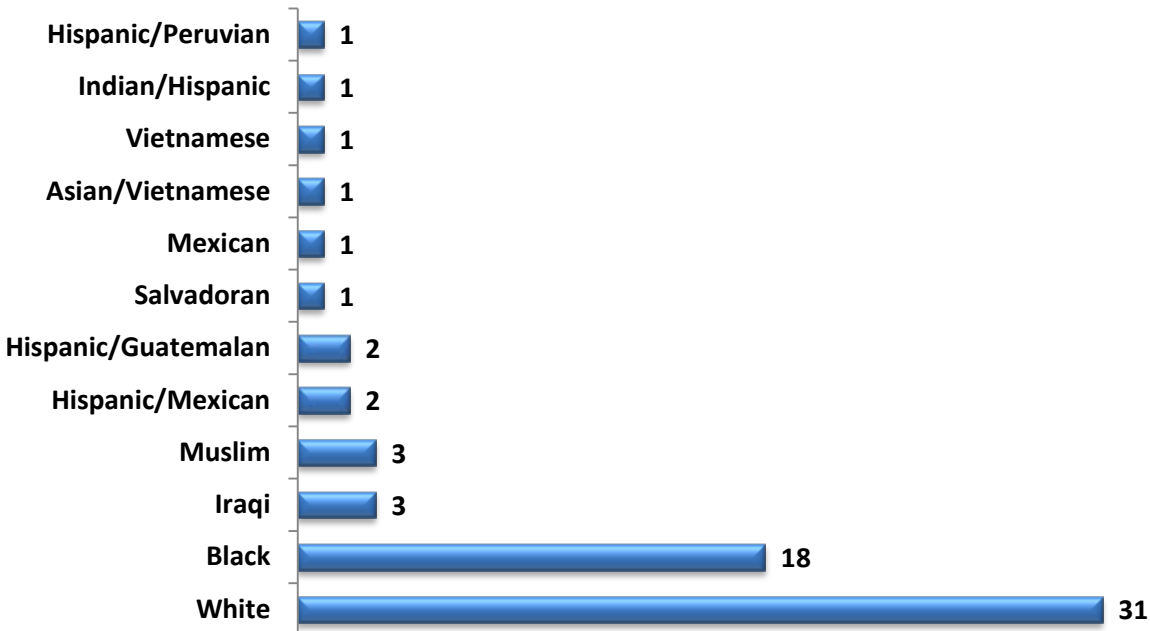
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Case Statistics Continued

Breakdown of Cases Filed by Gender



Breakdown of Cases Filed by Race / National Origin / Ethnicity** of Complainant



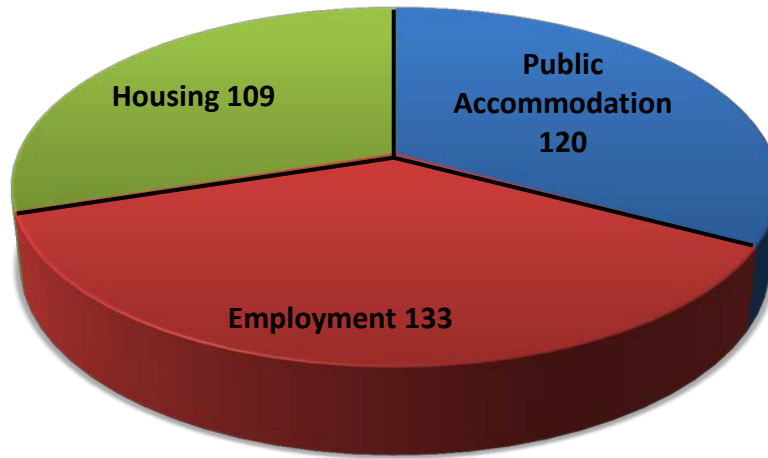
*N A / filed with the City of Lincoln as the Complainant.

**This provides an approximate demographic report based on the racial, national origin, or ethnic designation provided by the Complainant.

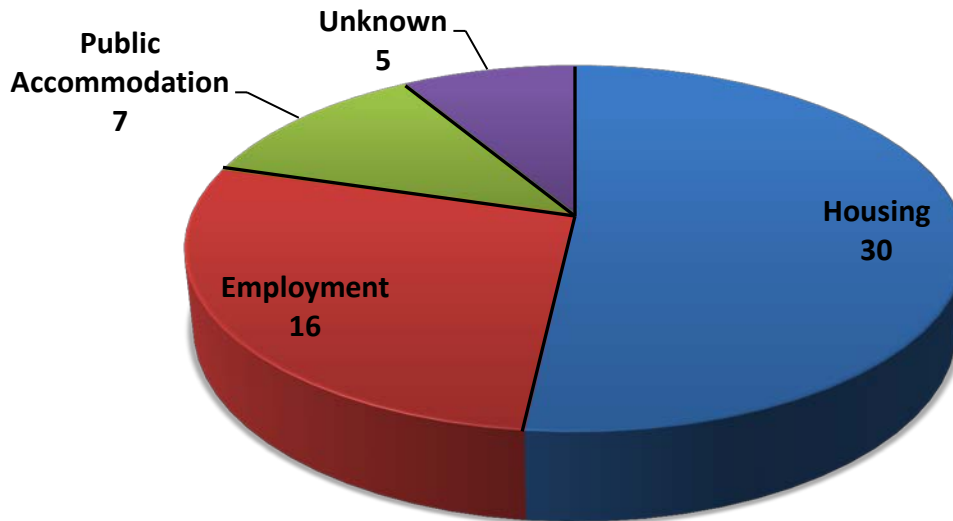
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Case Statistics Continued

Average Number of Days from Filing to Closure



Inquiries Not Resulting in a Complaint*

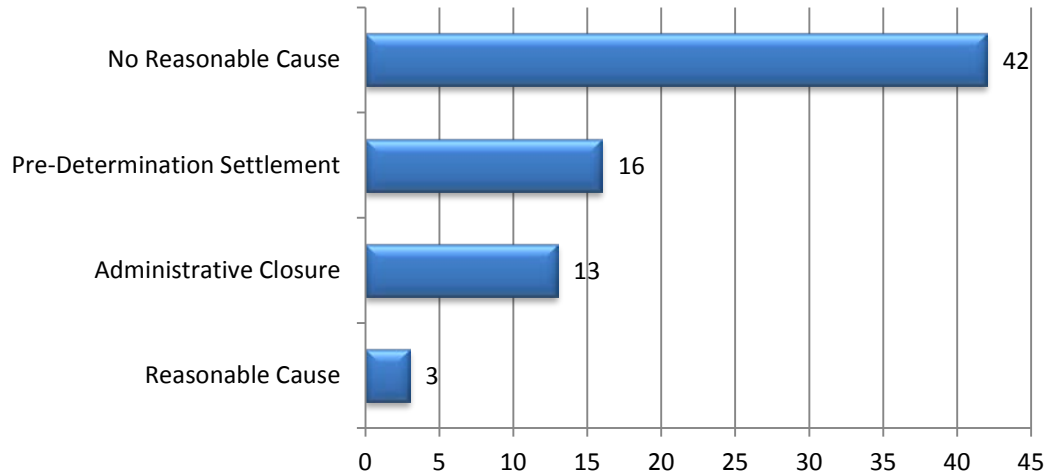


*There are various reasons why inquiries do not result in the filing of a complaint. They include, but are not limited to, the Commission not having subject matter jurisdiction, the individual not wanting to file a complaint, or the individual failing to follow-through with the filing of a complaint.

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Case Statistics Continued

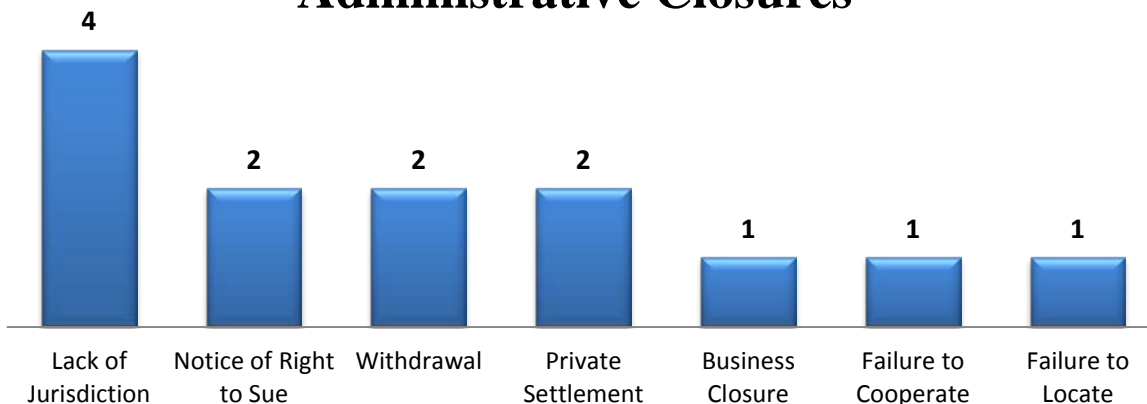
Breakdown of Commission Decisions



What do the numbers mean? No Reasonable Cause cases are when the Commissioners determine there is insufficient evidence to believe discrimination occurred. In Reasonable Cause determinations, Commissioners believe there is evidence of discrimination. Administrative Closures are cases closed for a variety of reasons (see chart below). Pre-Determination Settlements are cases closed due to a settlement agreement prior to a Commission decision. Successful conciliation occurs when the parties reach an agreement after the commission makes a reasonable cause finding.

Sometimes the Commissioners make more than one decision in a single case. Commissioners may determine that Reasonable Cause exists and those cases may later be closed in the same year by the Commission due to successful conciliation, public hearing determination, or issuance of a notice of right to sue. Because of this, the total number of Commission decisions may be greater than the number of cases closed.

Administrative Closures



Settlement Summaries

Pre-Determination,* Conciliation Settlements, and Withdrawals with Settlements

Employment

- \$100 payable to Complainant
- \$10,000; Respondent Managers attend Fair Employment Law training
- \$9,500; Respondent to not appeal unemployment determination, attend Equal Employment Training, and provide a neutral reference
- \$750; Neutral Reference
- \$4,500 payable to Complainant
- \$3,000 payable to Complainant
- \$2,000 payable to Complainant
- \$10,000 payable to Complainant
- \$1,500 payable to Complainant, neutral reference
- \$600 payable to Complainant

Housing

- Terminate lease with no penalties and post Fair Housing posters
- \$5,000 payable to Complainant and Respondent posts two Fair Housing posters
- Respondent attended Fair Housing training
- Respondent agreed to post notice that no one can adjust thermostats controls.
- Respondent returns \$300 deposit and attend Fair Housing Training
- Dismiss eviction, Complainant vacated by 3/31/16, released from lease, provide neutral reference, and attend Fair Housing Training
- Complainant pays \$1,846.02, Respondent agrees to 1 year lease and attended Fair Housing training, monthly statements, no penalties, and provide title when paid off

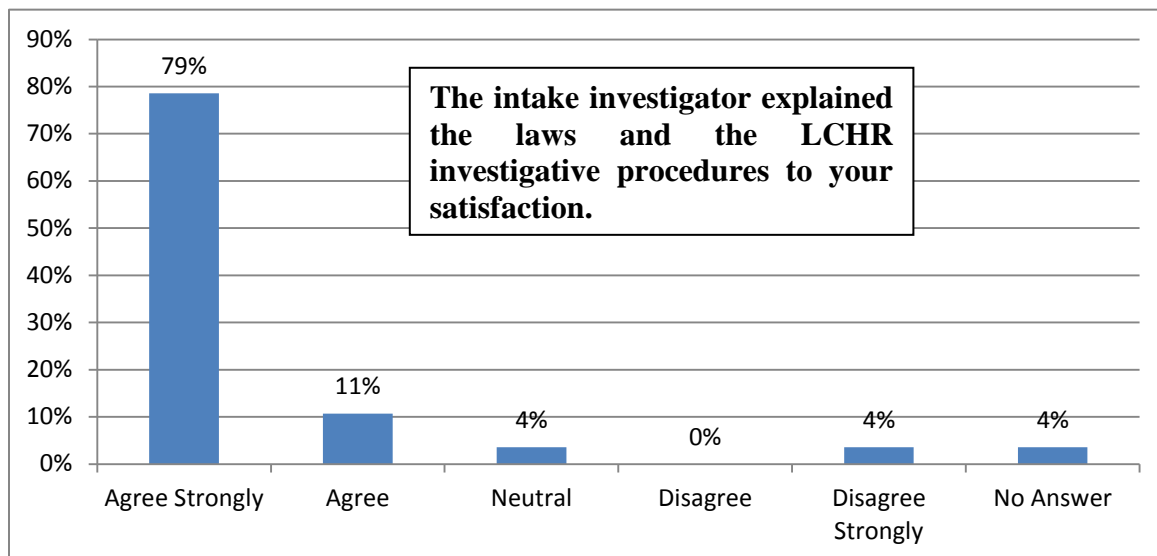
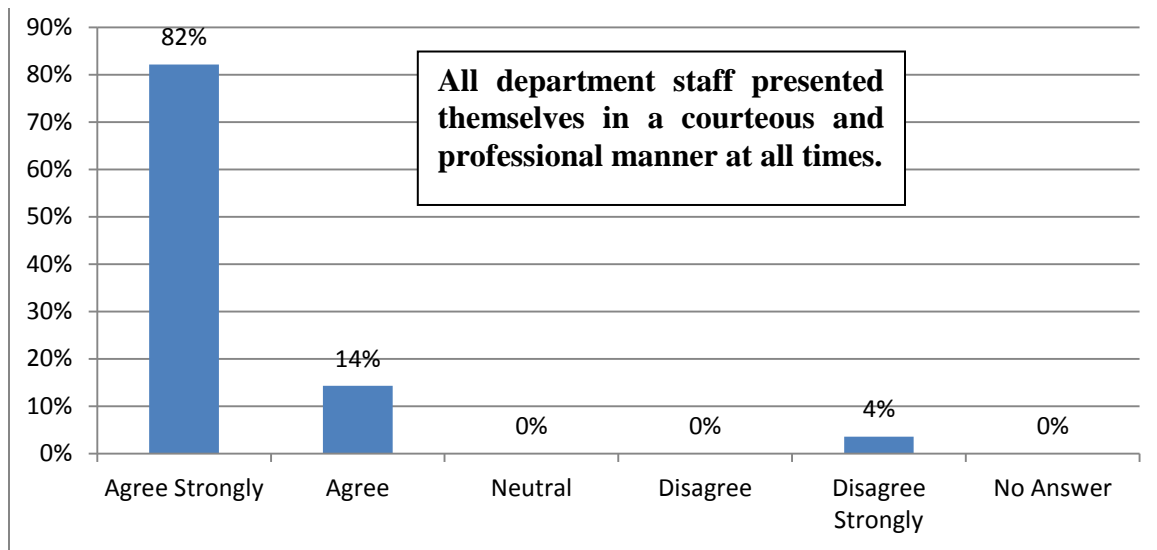
*A Pre-Determination Settlement (PDS) is a no-fault settlement agreement voluntarily entered into by both parties prior to the Commission making a determination in the case. Conciliation is a settlement agreement after a reasonable cause finding.

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Service Satisfaction Survey

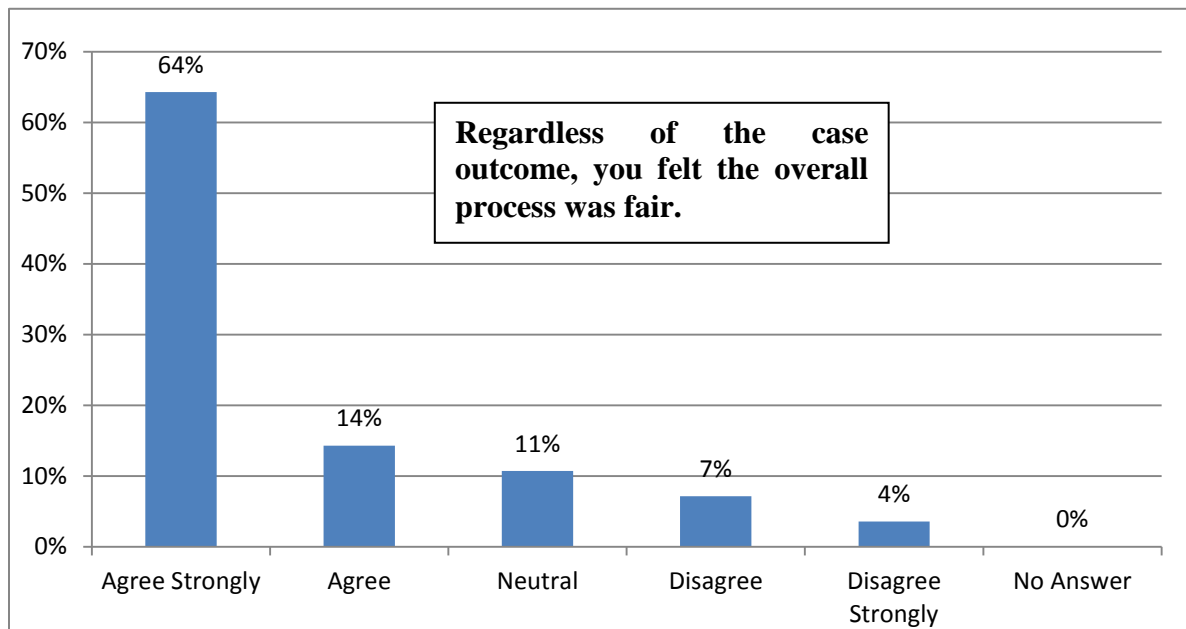
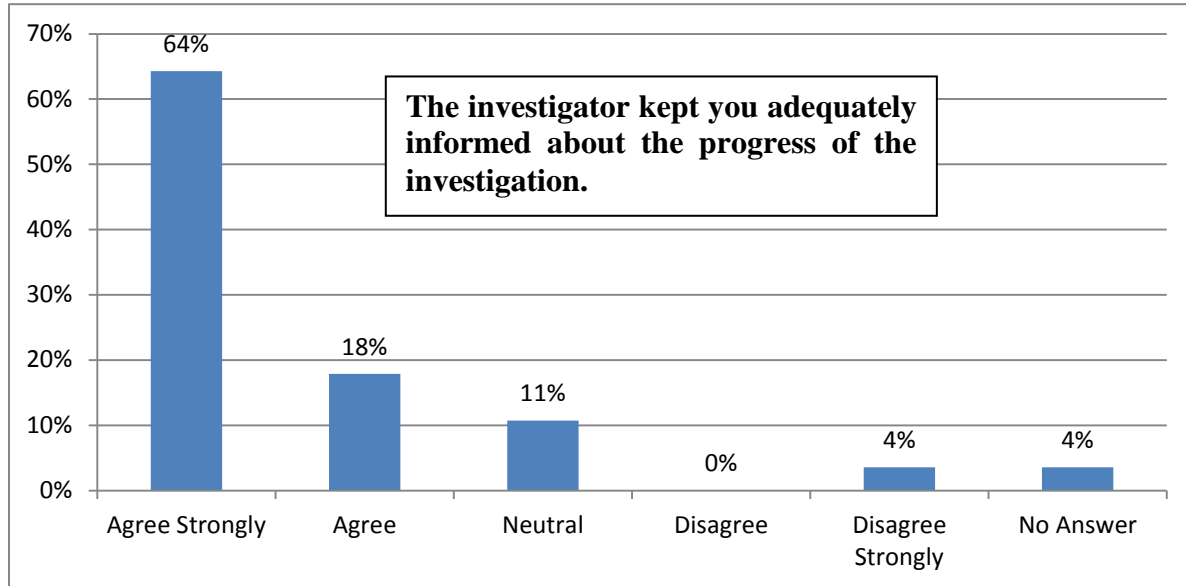
The Commission strives to achieve high satisfaction rates among Complainants and Respondents involved in investigations. In an effort to gauge how the staff and overall process is perceived Complainants and Respondents are asked to participate in a survey following case closure. Survey takers are asked to provide feedback on their comprehension of the process, overall satisfaction, and suggestions on how we could provide better service.

Complainants and Respondents were asked to rank our office on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being “Disagree Strongly” and 5 being “Agree Strongly”.



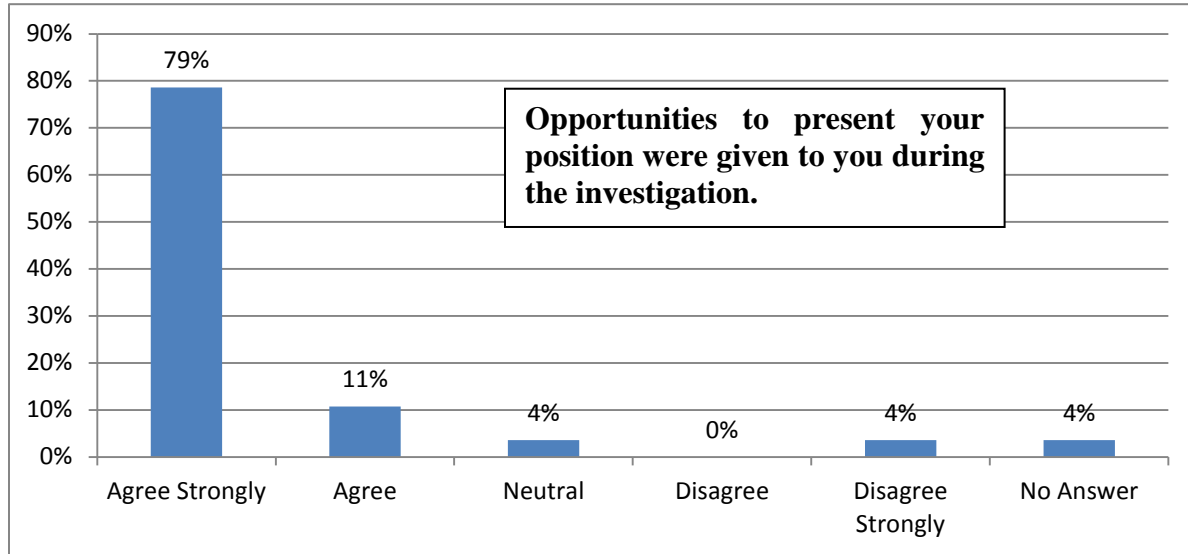
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Service Satisfaction Survey Continued

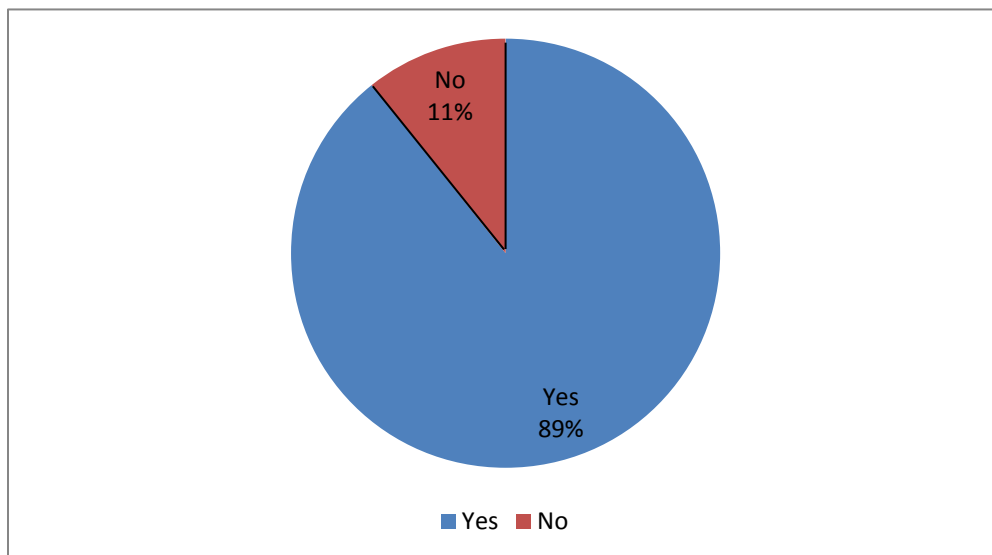


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Service Satisfaction Survey Continued



Would you refer someone experiencing discrimination to the LCHR?



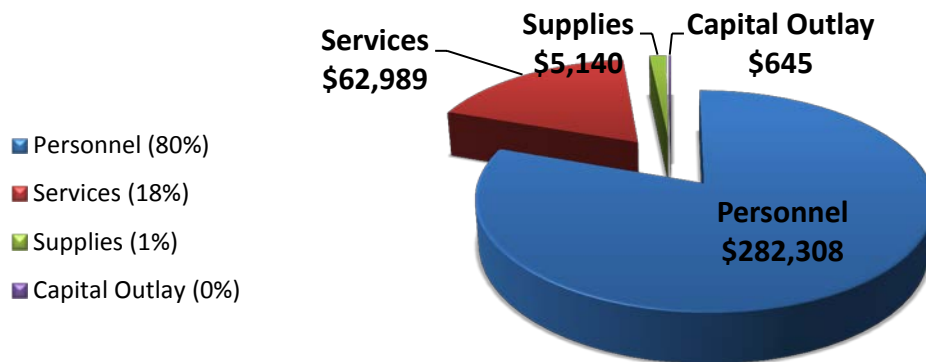
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Budget Fiscal Year 2015-2016

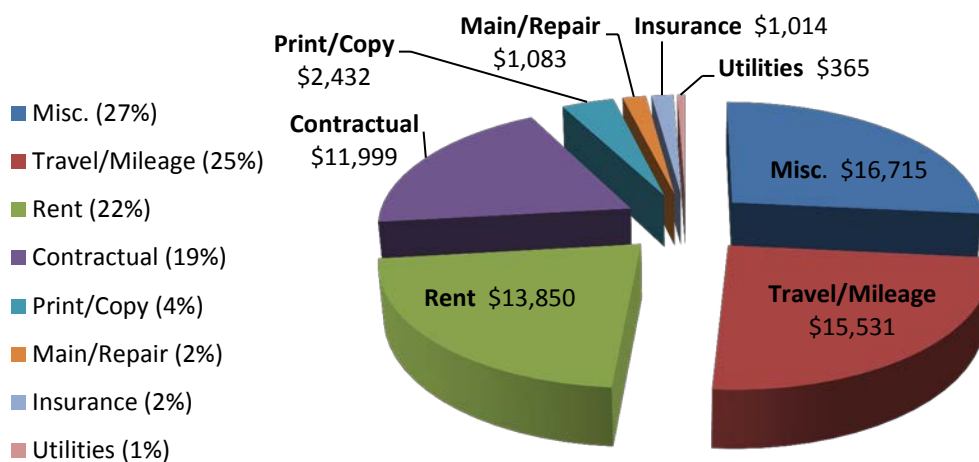
The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights' budget is comprised of funding from the City of Lincoln General Fund as well as two federal funding sources—the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. For FY 2015-2016, the budget expenditures were supported by \$172,683 from the General Fund and \$178,399 from federal funding sources for a total expenditure of \$351,082.

Where Did the Money Go?

Of the total \$351,082, the largest percentage went to personnel for salaries and benefits, for a total of \$282,308 or 80%. Services,* which expenditures cover insurance, travel, mileage, interpretation/translation costs, office rental, copying, printing, and utilities totaled \$62,989 or 18% of the budget. Office supplies account for \$5,140 or 1% of the budget, and capital outlay for computer equipment was \$645 or less than 1% of the total budget.



*Services Summary



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Education and Outreach

The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) provides services to the community to ensure individuals are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Equal Opportunity and Fair Housing laws. LCHR works to reach as many agencies, groups, community-based organizations, employers, property owners, civic groups, and individuals as possible. These efforts include training programs which can be customized to meet the needs of the target audience. Topics include: racial and sexual harassment, fair employment practices, fair housing laws, public accommodation laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and diversity training.

In 2016, the staff conducted training at a number of organizations for a total of 180 sessions reaching 6,652 people. These organizations include Lincoln Public School's Take Charge Education Classes, Lincoln Housing Authority, Rescare, American Job Center, Rentwise, and various fairs and festivals, such as: Juneteenth, Star City Pride Festival, Health Fairs, Streets Alive, Project Homeless Connect, and Community Cultural Conversations. There were also training sessions held with several Respondents. The Civil Rights Conference was attended by over 170 individuals and continues to provide the attendees with information on a wide range of civil rights topics.



Many organizations are represented at the Civil Rights Conference.



Participants listen at the 2016 Civil Rights Conference.



Outreach activities included the Chinese Festival (left) and a Hispanic Month Reading Program at Walt Library (right).



Award Recipient

Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award Recipient Thomas Christie



The **Gerald Henderson Human Rights Award** was awarded to Mr. Christie by LCHR Chair Bennie Shobe Jr. during the luncheon at our annual Civil Rights Conference. This award is given to a person or organization to recognize outstanding achievements in furthering human relations in Lincoln, Nebraska including a demonstrated commitment to improving cooperation and understanding among people of different racial, ethnic, religious and diverse backgrounds.

Thomas Christie is currently the Multicultural/Community Administrator (Office of the Superintendent) for the Lincoln Public Schools in Lincoln, Nebraska. He is responsible for directing the district's Multicultural Program, Cultural Proficiency and works in Human Resources, is Administrator for TeamMates and the District Office Building Principal.

He is President of the Clyde Malone Center Board, Vice – Chair of the Mayor's Multicultural Committee, member of Lincoln Public Schools Foundation, Chair of the Education Committee of the NAACP, University of Nebraska President's Advisory Council (PAC) and has been on the MLK Freedom Breakfast Committee since the inception. Past board service includes the City Recreation Committee, Lighthouse, UNL Teachers College Alumni Board, Lancaster Women's Commission, Lincoln Indian Education committee and Child Advocacy Center.

Thomas has 40 years of experience in the classroom and administration. Thomas was a building administrator for four years and taught Sociology, History and coached wrestling and football for 18 years. He is the administrator directing the cultural proficiency efforts, co-developer of the Racial Response Team project and played a key role in developing the district's Multicultural focus.

Thomas has a Bachelor's degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University and a Master's degree in Administration from the University of Nebraska. Thomas is a Lincoln High Distinguished Alumni and a member of the Lincoln High Athletic Hall of Fame.

He has been married to Brenda Christie for 40 years, and they have two children, Fayola Christie, and Yohance Christie.

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Contact Information



LCHR's website can be reached by the URL listed below. Included on our website is a fill-in form to file a discrimination complaint with the Commission, Commission Meeting minutes, the Civil Rights Conference registration form, past Conference materials, local resources and general information.

Lincoln Commission on Human Rights
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